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REGION 6 Preparedness, Response, and Prevention Update

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EPA and The National Response System *Natural Hazards Observer*, September 2004

Each year our environment and communities are threatened by more than 30,000 chemical releases, oil discharges, and other toxic spills. The National Response System (NRS) ensures that these threats are effectively managed through its network of people, plans, and resources. The NRS is coordinated by the National Response Team (NRT) and is made up of federal, state, and local officials. The NRS is thoroughly described in the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), found in 40 C.F.R. part 300. The NRT ensures that the most valuable tools in emergencies are available for pollution incidents of all sizes.

Key components of the NRT

The NRT is made up of 16 federal agencies, each with expertise in various aspects of emergency response and pollution accidents. Prior to an incident, the NRT provides policy guidance and assistance. During an incident, the NRT provides technical advice and provides access to resources and equipment from its member agencies. The EPA serves as the chair of the NRT, and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) serves as the co-chair. The interagency planning and coordination is replicated at the regional and local level as well.

Regional Response Team (RRT)

Regional Response Teams ensure that appropriate state and federal assistance will reach an incident scene quickly and efficiently. There are 13 RRTs, one for each of the ten federal regions, plus one for Alaska, Caribbean, and Oceania.

Each RRT develops a Regional Contingency Plan that describes the policy and procedures for an effective response to pollution incidents. More detailed plans are developed at the sub-regional level by Area Committees and at the local level by Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC). LEPCs are appointed and supervised by State Emergency Response Committees (SERC). Together SERCs, LEPCs and Area Committees ensure effective preparedness among all levels of government, and between private sector and public response efforts.

Federal On-Scene Coordinators

Federal On-Scene Coordinators (FOSCs) are direct response resources during an incident. FOSCs oversee area planning, provide access to the expertise of the 16 NRT member agencies, and are a valuable source of support and information to the response community.

FOSCs are pre-designated by the EPA for inland areas and by United States Coast Guard (USCG) for coastal areas. There are more than 250 EPA and USCG FOSCs located throughout the U.S. The Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of Energy (DOE) provide FOSCs support for pollution incidents at their facilities or under their jurisdiction.

The National Response Center

The National Response Center (NRC) is the communication core of the NRS. Federal law requires that the responsible party report oil spills, gas, hazardous liquid pipeline releases, chemical releases, and radiological releases to the NRC. The NRC is staffed 24 hours a day and receives 30,000 notifications a year. Each notification generates a report, and the NRC staff relay them to the appropriate FOSC and to the state Emergency Response Center (EOC). An important feature of the NRS is that it requires no federal declaration to obtain federal support. A phone call to the FOSC through the NRC allows immediate activation of the NRS.

International Involvement

Through the NRT, the U.S. has established joint contingency plans and agreements with Mexico and Canada to insure coordinated and integrated preparedness for response to incidents that occur along the shared boarders. The NRT serves as co-chair of the International Joint Advisory Team in Mexico, and the International Joint Response Team in Mexico. The joint teams are the policy and advisory bodies with overall responsibility for maintenance, promotion, and coordination of agreements. The NRT also coordinates long-term preparedness and response assistance to the Panama Canal.

Counter-Terrorism Planning and Response

In event of a terrorist incident involving biological or chemical agents, and weapons of mass destruction, the NRT has access to key assets and capabilities of its 16 member agencies to support other federal agencies, state, and local responders. The NRT, RRT, and FOSCs actively participate in the counter-terrorism preparedness activities to help foster a coordinated federal, state, and local response.

Disaster Declarations

When the president declares a disaster under the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, the Federal Response Plan (FRP) governs federal agency assistance in dealing with a disaster. In the event the disaster involves the potential or actual release of hazardous materials, the Emergency Support Function 10 (ESF-10) is activated by FEMA. The ESF-10 brings resources provided by the NRT to a federal response.

NRT Agencies and Type of Support:

The 16 agencies provide access to technical assistance, scientific expertise, logistical support, and coordination capabilities associated with its specific responsibilities and expertise:

- Department of Agriculture (USDA) – USDA's forest service, agricultural research service, and other agencies have capabilities to evaluate, monitor and control situations where natural resources have been impacted by hazardous substances and other natural man-made emergencies.
- Department of Defense (DOD) -During an emergency they may provide temporary restoration of essential public facilities and services.
- Department of Energy (DOE) – DOE will respond to any nuclear/radiological incident and provide monitoring assessment.
- Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) – HHS, Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the National Institute of Environmental Health Services provide worker health and safety training.
- National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – NOAA provides scientific information and expertise to mitigate the impact of oil and hazardous substance releases on natural resources in coastal areas.
- Department of Interior (DOI) – DOI provides scientific information to FOSCs to help protect sensitive natural, recreational, and cultural area resources.
- Department of Justice (DOJ) – DOJ provides expert legal advice on legal issues arising during an incident.
- Department of Labor (DOL) – DOL's OSHA ensures the safety and protection of workers.
- Department of State (DOS) – DOS helps coordinate international response efforts.
- Department of Transportation (DOT) – DOT administers national transportation safety programs for hazardous materials.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – EPA coordinates preparedness and response efforts for hazardous substance releases and oil discharges in the inland zone.

- General Services Administration (GSA) – GSA provides logistical and telecommunications during an incident.
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) – NRC is the lead federal agency during a radiological event.
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) – DHS provides leadership to state and local government in preparing for and responding to nationally significant events.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – FEMA is the lead agency for administering technical and financial assistance during a Presidential Declared Disaster.
- United States Coast Guard (USCG) – USCG provides FOSCs for the coastal zone and coordinates between the government and industry for oil spills and hazardous substance releases.

WHAT IS AN OSC? EPA On Scene Coordinator, Friend or Foe? By Steve Way and Charles Fisher

The On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) for the federal government has been a role filled since the 1970s. Initially, the OSCs were primarily responsible for responding to oil releases to navigable waters. As the need to respond to additional hazardous material events increased, the role of the OSC was expanded under Superfund, the Oil Pollution Act authorities, and the National Oil and Hazardous Substance Contingency Plan (NCP). The funding and the authorities available enable the OSC to respond to releases of hazardous substances and oil, as well as take the necessary actions to investigate, mitigate, contain, or remove a release or a substantial threat of a release into the environment. In addition, the OSC is responsible for identifying the responsible party and overseeing the clean-up, if the responsible party is capable of implementing a response action. If the responsible party does not take action, then the OSC, representing the lead federal agency at the site, may take action in addition to any other action taken by the state or local government.

The NCP calls for the use of a management approach, such as a unified command system, during an emergency incident. The OSC is expected to coordinate with state and local response agencies, and the responsible party in managing and directing the resources necessary to respond. During an incident, the roles and responsibilities of the EPA OSC, the local responders, and the state are generally complimentary and not conflicting or redundant. The EPA OSC cannot function as a first responder and rely on local emergency response agencies to secure and manage the initial response. Depending on the magnitude and type of incident, the OSC may direct some or all of the response operations and clean-up efforts. Ultimately, the OSC is responsible for ensuring that the actions taken are protective of human health and the environment.

For example, if a fire department is directing a response to a chemical fire, the OSC could provide technical support such as air monitoring, recommendations regarding evacuation or run-off containment, and other similar actions. Although the OSC normally would not attempt to direct the fire fighting actions, it is important, at this time, to initiate the coordination required between response agencies by using the unified command system. Once a fire is controlled and a response to the hazardous substance release is underway, then the OSC would be expected to direct those actions, in coordination with the responsible party, the State, and local officials, using EPA resources or by overseeing the responsible party. One of the most important things that the OSC brings to an incident is the ability to access extensive resources through EPA and the federal response system. These resources can consist of technical support including monitoring, sampling, analytical work, technical experts, and the OSC can initiate clean-up actions using either government or local response contractors.

Superfund = Super Help!

GOT AN EMERGENCY? WHO YOU GONNA CALL? EPA SUPERFUND! Anyone who lived through the 1980's will remember the Ghostbusters ... they were available in a flash to provide assistance when things got out of hand. Like the Ghostbusters, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Superfund program was designed to help cities and counties solve major public health and environmental problems when these problems get out of hand. SUPERFUND = SUPER HELP! Most local communities have adequate fire and emergency capabilities to handle normal emergency situations in the community, and have been doing a good job of handling these types of situations. But should a major environmental emergency occur, one that requires a response beyond what the local fire and emergency departments can supply, who can you call for help? EPA SUPERFUND!

The Superfund program provides cities and counties Federal emergency assistance during those times when the local communities can't quite handle it alone, such as an overturned tanker truck hauling hazardous materials or identifying a warehouse full of hazardous drums with a questionable origin.

The program uses EPCRA to assist communities and LEPCs to prepare for environmental emergencies. Some of Superfund's other EPCRA activities include assistance in conducting drills and exercises, and conducting compliance assistance workshops for industries in an area, and providing technical assistance on planning concerns.

The EPA has a long history of a strong working relationship with each state in Region 6. The relationship has ensured proper and appropriate response during incidents from both the state and federal agencies. Now, for the final examination! You need help planning for an emergency ... or worse, the emergency has occurred: a train wreck ... or a tanker truck has overturned threatening public health or the environment in your community; or you have come across a warehouse full of abandoned drums. **WHO YOU GONNA CALL?? EPA SUPERFUND!!**

Contact Information:

Below you will find State and Federal Contact numbers. If your community experiences an incident and needs assistance from the EPA you can call the number listed below directly.

Emergency Numbers for Spill Reporting in Region 6

Arkansas Dept. of Emergency Management	800-322-4012
Louisiana State Police	877-925-6595
New Mexico State Police	505-827-9126
Oklahoma Dept. of Environmental Quality	800-522-0206
Texas Environmental Hotline	800-832-8224
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National Response Center	800-424-8802
EPA Region 6	877-372-7745
CHEMTREC	800-424-9300

Local Government Reimbursement Program (LGR), article from EPA website

The Local Governments Reimbursement Program provides federal funds to local governments for costs related to temporary emergency measures conducted in response to releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances. The program serves as a "safety net" to provide supplemental funding to local governments that do not have funds available to pay for these response actions. Eligible local governments may submit applications to EPA for reimbursement of up to $25,000 per incident.

On February 18, 1998, EPA published a new LGR regulation that simplifies and streamlines the process for applicants. EPA has designed the reimbursement process to be very straightforward. Local governments obtain and complete a simple LGR application form that requires a local government to provide basic information about the incident, document its response costs by attaching copies of receipts, and certify that certain program requirements have been met. An applicant **may** receive a reimbursement check from the federal government in as little as three months after EPA receives the application. Local governments can take action today to help ensure that they are eligible to participate in the LGR program in the future.

EPA's LGR Program is just a telephone call away. If you have any questions about the LGR program and how it works, you can call the LGR HelpLine at 800-431-9209 or e-mail us at lgr.epa@epamail.epa.gov.

PLEASE MAIL COMPLETED APPLICATIONS TO:

US Environmental Protection Agency
Local Governments Reimbursement (LGR) Program
Attn. Lisa Boynton
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue
Mail Code 5204-G
Washington, DC 20460

It is highly recommended that you send applications through the U.S. Postal Service 1st class, unregistered. Any other methods of delivery will delay receipt of your application from the EPA

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Region 6 LEPC Contacts and Coordinators

Arkansas:	**Kenny Harmon**	**501-730-9750**	**Kenny.Harmon@dem.state.ar.us**
Louisiana:	**Bob Hayes**	**225-925-6113 X227**	**bhays@dpsmail.dps.state.la.us**
New Mexico:	**Don Shainin**	**505-476-9681**	**dshanin@dps.state.nm.us**
Oklahoma:	**Dale Magnin**	**405-521-2481**	**dale.magnin@dem.state.ok.us**
	Tom Bergman	**405-702-1013**	**tom.bergman@deqmail.state.ok.us**
Texas:	**Brad Ellis**	**512-424-2589**	**brad.ellis@txdps.state.tx.us**
	Paula McKinney	**800-452-2791**	**pmckinney@beh.tdh.state.tx.us**

CAMEO CORNER

ALOHA Problem:
Scenario: An 8,000 gallon semi-trailer placarded 1170 is stopped at a local convenience store. The liquid product is gushing from a failed 2" valve located at the bottom of the tank, rear end of the truck. 30 minutes have elapsed before you are consulted. Responders at the scene estimate tank size as 25 feet by 8 feet. The liquid runoff has been contained in the parking lot; no estimate of the pool/puddle size is currently available.

Assume the following weather conditions:

Wind Speed	10 mph
Wind Direction	S
Ground Roughness	Open
Partly Cloudy	5
Temperature	65 degrees F
Relative Humidity	50%.

Question 1: Is it possible to model this substance using ALOHA?

Question 2: With the information currently available, which ALOHA Source Option(s) could be utilized?

Question 3: What value will you use for the Level of Concern? Explain why the available LOC values are all the "same" number.

Question 4: Analyze the "footprint" information for a "Tank" Source release. Explain why ALOHA does not "draw" the plume/footprint for a Tank Source, but does "draw" a footprint for a "Direct/Instantaneous" source.

Question 5: What is the ALOHA estimate of the time necessary for the product to escape the tank and completely evaporate.

Answer:

Question 1: Is it possible to model this substance using ALOHA?

Answer: Yes, Ethanol is in the ALOHA Chemical Library

Question 2: With the information currently available, which ALOHA Source Option(s) could be utilized?

Answer: The Direct/Instantaneous Source could be used to create a "worst-case" scenario. However, with the information given, the "Tank" Source could be used. "Puddle" source could not be used.

Question 3: What value will you use for the Level of Concern? Explain why the available LOC values are all the "same" number.

Answer: The IDLH and TEEL values are based on the LEL for Ethanol. LEL = 3.3%; which converts to 33,000 ppm. Thus the IDLH and TEEL 2 & 3 values are set to 10% of LEL.

Question 4: Analyze the "footprint" information for a "Tank" Source release. Explain why ALOHA does not "draw" the plume/footprint for a Tank Source, but does "draw" a footprint for a "Direct/Instantaneous" source.

Answer: The Direct/Instantaneous Source requires all products to be released and evaporated in 1 minute. This is highly unrealistic in this scenario; but ALOHA will "draw" the footprint for this Source condition. Bear in mind that this is highly inaccurate, even as a "worst-case" scenario.

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We're on the Web!
See us at:
www.epa.gov/region6/lepc

Question 5: What is the ALOHA estimate of the time necessary for the product to escape the tank and completely evaporate.

Answer: ALOHA has "limited" the release duration to 1 hour, which means the release will continue past the 60 minute time. To calculate the total release time, use the information found in the Source Strength section of the Text Summary.

Exercise developed by Tom Bergman; ODEQ

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Recipe for Happiness

Author Unknown

2 Heaping cups of patience
1 Heart full of love
2 Hands full of generosity
Dash of laughter
1 Head full of understanding
Sprinkle generously with kindness
Add plenty of faith and mix well.
Spread over a period of a lifetime
And serve everyone you meet.

HAPPY SPRING!!!!